



A Resolution of the Sunset Beach Town Council Adopting a Code of Ethics for the Governing Body of the Town of Sunset Beach

WHEREAS, the purpose of this document is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for the elected officials of the Town of Sunset Beach and to provide guidance in determining what conduct is appropriate in particular cases. It should not be considered a substitute for the law. As public officials, we are charged with upholding the trust of the citizens and residents of Sunset Beach, and with obeying all applicable laws. Our citizens, residents and staff are entitled to the most open and ethical government possible.

Now, **THEREFORE**, acting pursuant to the requirements of Section 160A-86 of the North Carolina General Statutes, be it **RESOLVED**, that we, the Town Council of Sunset Beach, do hereby adopt the following Code of Ethics to guide the Mayor and Council in their lawful decision-making:

Preamble

The stability and proper operation of a democratic representative government depends upon public confidence in the integrity of the government, and upon responsible exercise of the trust conferred by the people. Government decisions and policy must be made and implemented through proper channels and utilizing the appropriate processes of the governmental structure.

The Mayor and Council must be able to act in a manner that maintains their integrity, independence and professional decorum, yet is responsive to the interests and needs of those they represent. The Mayor and Council fulfill different roles at various times. They serve as:

- Advocates, who strive to advance the legitimate needs of their citizens, community and the environment.
- Legislators, who balance the public interest and private rights when considering and enacting ordinances, orders and resolutions.
- Adjudicators or administrators who act as fair and impartial decision makers and as stewards of the resources of the Town.

The Mayor and Council must know how to distinguish these roles, to determine when each role is appropriate, and to act accordingly. The Mayor and Council must be aware of their obligation to conform their behavior to standards of ethical conduct that warrant the trust of their constituents.

Section 1

The Mayor and Council shall obey all laws applicable to their official actions as members of the Governing Body. The Mayor and Council should be guided by the spirit as well as the letter of the law in whatever they do. At the same time, the Mayor and Council should feel free to assert policy positions and opinions without fear of reprisal from fellow members or citizens. To assert that the Mayor or a Council member is behaving unethically because of disagreeing with another member on any matter before them, and not because of the member's behavior, is unfair, irresponsible, and is itself unethical.

Section 2

The Mayor and Council should act with integrity and independence from improper influence as they exercise the duties of their offices.

- They should demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty and respect towards others in all activities in order to inspire public confidence and trust in local government.
- They should use their best judgment to pursue the common good as they see it, presenting their opinions to all in a reasonable, forthright and consistent manner.
- They should remain incorruptible, self-governing, and unaffected by improper influence.
- They should disclose contacts and information about issues that they receive outside of public meetings.
- They should treat other Council members and the public with respect, and honor the opinions of others even when they disagree.
- They should be careful not to reach conclusions on issues until all sides have been heard.
- They should recognize that individual Council members are not generally allowed to act on behalf of the Council but may do so only if the Council specifically authorizes it.

Section 3

The Mayor and Council should avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in the exercise of their official duties. Their official actions should be above reproach.

The Mayor and Council should carefully evaluate their non-governmental activities to minimize the risk of conflicts of interest.

If the Mayor or a Council member believes that his or her actions, while legal and ethical, may be misunderstood, he or she should seek the advice of the Town's attorney and should consider publicly disclosing the facts of the situation and the steps taken to resolve it.

Section 4

The Mayor and Council should faithfully perform the duties of their offices. They should act as especially responsible citizens whom others can trust and respect. They should set a good example for others in the community, keeping in mind that trust and respect must continually be earned.

The Mayor and Council should faithfully attend and prepare for meetings. They should carefully analyze all credible information properly submitted to them, mindful of the legal limitations placed upon communications outside of a meeting in quasi-judicial matters. They should demand full accountability from those over whom the Council has authority.

The Mayor and Council should be willing to bear their fair share of the Governing Body's workload. To the extent appropriate, they should be willing to put the Town's interests ahead of their own.

Section 5

The Mayor and Council should conduct the affairs of the Governing Body in an open and public manner in compliance with the letter and intent of North Carolina Law. They should comply with all applicable laws governing open meetings and public records, recognizing that doing so is an important way to be worthy of the public's trust and confidence. They should remember when they meet that they are conducting the public's business. They should also remember that local government records belong to the public and not to the Governing Body or the Town's employees.

In order to ensure strict compliance with the laws concerning openness, the Mayor and Council should strive to be open. They should prohibit unjustified delays in fulfilling public records requests. They should take deliberate steps to ensure that any closed sessions held by them are lawfully conducted, and that such sessions do not stray from the purposes for which they are called.

Adopted this 4th day of October, 2010

TOWN OF SUNSET BEACH

Mayor Ronald Klein

ATTEST:

Lisa Anglin, Town Clerk